

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 have been amended. Claim 17 has been added. Claims 1-17 remain for further consideration. No new matter has been added.

The objections and rejections shall be taken up in the order presented in the Official Action.

1-2. Claims 3-6 currently stand rejected for allegedly being indefinite for failing to point out and distinctly claim the subject matter deemed to be the present invention.

Claims 3-6 have been amended.

3-4. Claims 1-2, 4-5 and 7-16 currently stand rejected for allegedly being obvious in view of the combined subject matter disclosed in U.S. Patent 5,867,484 to Shaunfield (hereinafter "Shaunfield") and U.S. Patent 6,310,848 to Ueki (hereinafter "Ueki").

Claim 1

Claim 1 recites a local network having a ring network configuration with a plurality of subscribers each connected within the ring network by an data line to transmit and receive data therebetween. The local network includes:

“a first subscriber configured as a data source that transmits compressed audio and video data onto the ring network;

a second subscriber that receives decompressed audio data;

a third subscriber that receives decompressed video data,

a fourth subscriber that includes

(i) a bit stream decoder that decodes the compressed audio and video data and provides decompressed audio and video data;

(ii) a separation stage that receives the decompressed audio and video data and separates the decompressed audio and video data to provide

the decompressed audio data signal and the decompressed video data signal; and

(iii) a control unit that controls the transmission of the decompressed audio data signal and the decompressed video data signal onto the ring network.” (cl. 1).

The Official Action contends that Shaunfield discloses all of the features of claim 1, “*but fails to specifically teach a separating stage that receives said decompressed data and separates audio and video data within said compressed data to provide a decompressed video data signal and a decompressed audio data signal.*” (Official Action, pg. 3). The Official Action contends that “*in analogous art, ‘848 (i.e., Ueki) teaches a recording/reproducing apparatus that includes a decompressing circuit with an A/V decoder for decompressing the audio/video data. The apparatus also includes a separation circuit that separates the decompressed data into audio and video signals (col. 6, lines 61-67).*” (Official Action, pgs. 3-4). The Official Action concludes that “*it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of ‘484 to include a separation state for separating the decompressed audio data from the decompressed video data in order to supply the video data to a display device, i.e. a monitor, and the audio data to a audio reproducing device, i.e. a speaker (col. 6, line 64-col. 7, line 4).*” (Official Action, pg. 4).

Upon a fair and proper reading, the combined teachings of Shaunfield and Ueki fails to disclose a number of features of claim 1. For example, the combined teachings fail to disclose or suggest the claimed feature where “*a first subscriber configured as a data source that transmits compressed audio and video data onto the ring network.*” (emphasis added, cl. 1). The Official Action contends that Shaunfield in FIG. 2, item 53 and col. 6, lines 15-20, discloses this claimed feature. (Official Action, pg. 3). However, the node 53 of Shaunfield is disclosed at col. 6, lines

15-20 and this cited section of Shaunfield merely discloses the compressing of solely video data. This cited section *fails to disclose or suggest compressed audio data*. In fact, Shaunfield is devoid of any discussion of compressed audio data. Shaunfield is primarily concerned with a *video* distribution network or system (See, e.g., col. 3, lines 66-67; col. 5, lines 41-42; col. 6, lines 7-8). The combined teachings of Shaunfield and Ueki neither discloses nor suggests “*a first subscriber configured as a data source that transmits compressed audio and video data onto the ring network.*” (emphasis added, cl. 1). Again, contrary to the contention in the Official Action, Shaunfield neither discloses nor suggests transmitting compressed audio and video data signal onto the ring network.

In addition, the combined teachings of Shaunfield and Ueki neither discloses nor suggests the claimed feature of “*a fourth subscriber that includes (i) a bit stream decoder that decodes the compressed audio and video data and provides decompressed audio and video data;*” (cl. 1). The Official Action contends that Shaunfield in FIG. 2, item 50 and col. 4, lines 40-44; col. 7, lines 8-11, disclose this claimed feature. However, item 50 in FIG. 2 is a master node, and the corresponding description at col. 4, lines 40-44 only discloses the decompression of video data, and **lacks any disclosure or suggestion of the decompression of audio data**. Similarly, the cited Shaunfield section identified in the Official Action of col. 7, lines 8-11 of again only discloses the decoding of video data, and lacks any disclosure or suggestion of the decoding of audio data.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the combined teachings of Shaunfield and Ueki fails to disclose several of the features of claim 1. As such, it is respectfully submitted that combined teachings of Shaunfield and Ueki fails to disclose various features of claim 1, including those discussed above.

Claim 9

Claim 9 currently stands rejected in the Official Action for the same reasons as claim 1, and the arguments presented hereinabove with respect to the patentability of claim 1 are applicable to claim 9. As a result, it is submitted that the obviousness rejection of claim 9 should be removed, and that claim 9 is in condition for allowance and should be passed to issuance.

Claim 11

Claim 11 currently stands rejected in the Official Action for the same reasons as claim 1, and the arguments presented hereinabove with respect to the patentability of claim 1 are applicable to claim 11. As a result, it is submitted that the obviousness rejection of claim 11 should be removed, and that claim 11 is in condition for allowance and should be passed to issuance.

Claim 16

Claim 16 currently stands rejected in the Official Action for the same reasons as claim 1, and the arguments presented hereinabove with respect to the patentability of claim 1 are applicable to claim 16. As a result, it is submitted that the obviousness rejection of claim 16 should be removed, and that claim 16 is in condition for allowance and should be passed to issuance.

5. Claims 1-3 currently stand rejected for allegedly being obvious in view of the combined subject matter disclosed in Shaunfield, Ueki and U.S. Patent 4,646,061 to Bledsoe (hereinafter “Bledsoe”).

Claim 1

Claim 1 currently stands rejected in paragraph 5 of the Official Action for the same reasons as the obviousness rejection noted above with respect to the alleged combination of Shaunfield and Ueki in paragraphs **3 and 4** of the Official Action, the arguments presented hereinabove in paragraphs **3 and 4** with respect to the patentability of claim 1 are applicable here. As a result, it is submitted that the obviousness rejection of claim 1 should be removed, and that claim 1 is in condition for allowance and should be passed to issuance.

6. Claims 1 and 6 currently stand rejected for allegedly being obvious in view of the combined subject matter disclosed in Shaunfield and U.S. Patent 5,544,161 to Bigham (hereinafter “Bigham”).

Claim 1

Claim 1 recites a local network having a ring network configuration with a plurality of subscribers each connected within the ring network by an optical data line to transmit and receive data therebetween. The Official Action contends that Shaunfield discloses all of the features of claim 1, *“but fails to specifically teach a separating stage that receives said decompressed data and separates audio and video data within said compressed data to provide a decompressed video data signal and a decompressed audio data signal.”* (Official Action, pgs. 8-9). The Official Action contends that *“in analogous art, ‘161 (i.e., Bigham) teaches an MPEG system demultiplexer in a digital entertainment terminal attached to a broadcast ring that recognizes*

audio and video packets in the data stream, separates and routes them to an video decoder and an audio decoder (Figs. 2, 5 and 8; col. 30, lines 45-52)." (Official Action, pg. 9). The Official Action concludes that "*it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of '484 to have the multiplexer separate the audio and video data in order to send the separated signals to a video decoder and an audio decoder in order to transmit the decompressesd data to appropriate output devices for reproduction (col. 30, lines 54-57)."* (Official Action, pg. 9).

Upon a fair and proper reading, the combined teachings of Shaunfield and Bigham fails to disclose a number of features of claim 1. For example, Shaunfield fails to disclose the claimed feature where "*a first subscriber configured as a data source that transmits compressed audio and video data onto the ring network.*" The Official Action contends that Shaunfield in FIG. 2, item 53 and col. 6, lines 15-20, disclose this claimed feature. (Official Action, pg. 3). However, **Shaunfield merely discloses at col. 6, lines 15-20 compressing of solely video data.** This cited section of Shaunfield fails to disclose or suggest compressed audio data. In fact, Shaunfield is devoid of any discussion of compressed audio data, as Shaunfield is primarily concerned with a video distribution network or system (See, e.g., col. 3, lines 66-67; col. 5, lines 41-42; col. 6, lines 7-8).

In addition, Shaunfield fails to disclose the claimed feature of "*a fourth subscriber that includes (i) a bit stream decoder that decodes the compressed audio and video data and provides decompressed audio and video data;*" (cl. 1). The Official Action contends that Shaunfield in FIG. 2, item 50 and col. 4, lines 40-44; col. 7, lines 8-11, disclose this claimed feature. However, item 50 in FIG. 2 is a master node, and the corresponding description at col. 4, lines 40-44 only discloses the decompression of video data, and lacks any disclosure or suggestion of the

decompression of audio data. In like manner, the cited section of col. 7, lines 8-11 merely discloses decoding of video data, and lacks any disclosure or suggestion of the decoding of audio data.

Also, as noted above the Official Action contends that “*Bigham teaches an MPEG system demultiplexer in a digital entertainment terminal attached to a broadcast ring that recognizes audio and video packets in the data stream, separates and routes them to an video decoder and an audio decoder (Figs. 2, 5 and 8; col. 30, lines 45-52).*” (Official Action, pg. 9). This passage thus discloses the separation of compressed audio and video data together in one data stream into separate audio and video data streams that are then decoded. However, claim 1 recites the feature where “*a separation stage that receives the decompressed audio and video data and separates the decompressed audio and video data to provide a decompressed audio data signal and a decompressed video data signal.*” Thus, in the present claimed invention the separation stage receives the audio and video data already decompressed or decoded, in contrast to Bigham where the separation stage receives compressed audio and video data.

In light of the foregoing, the combined teachings of Shaunfield and Bigham fail to disclose several features of claim 1. As such, it is respectfully submitted that Shaunfield and Bigham are not properly combinable to render claim 1 obvious. However, assuming for the moment that Shaunfield and Bigham are properly combinable, without admitting as much, even if the references were combined as alleged in the Official Action, the resultant combination still fails to disclose various features of claim 1, including those discussed above.

In light of the foregoing, it is submitted that the obviousness rejection of claim 1 is moot and should be removed, and that claim 1 is in condition for allowance and should be passed to issuance.

For all the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-17 is respectfully requested.

If a telephone interview could assist in the prosecution of this application, please call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE DRAWINGS:

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to FIGs. 1-2. These sheets replace the original sheets that included FIGs. 1-2.